

CLAIMS

1. A network computer system, comprising:
a processor;
a memory device coupled to the processor, the memory device containing an embedded operating system that is executed by the processor;
a network communication circuit coupled to the processor; the network communication circuit being adapted to allow the processor to communicate over a computer network with computer resources coupled to the network; and
a mass storage device coupled to the processor, the mass storage device storing user preference data and user file data that may be accessed by the processor.
2. The network computer of claim 1 wherein the network communication circuit comprises a broadband communications device.
3. The network computer of claim 2 wherein the broadband communications device comprises a cable modem.
4. The network computer of claim 2 wherein the broadband communications device comprises a DSL modem.
5. The network computer of claim 1 wherein the mass storage device comprises a hard disk.
6. The network computer of claim 5 wherein the hard disk comprises a user preferences partition and a user file data partition that store associated user preference data and user file data, respectively, with the data in each partition being capable of being set to desired values independently of the data in the other partition.

7. The network computer of claim 6 wherein the hard disk further comprises a user preferences reset device and a user file data reset device

8. The network computer of claim 1 wherein the embedded operating system includes system parameters having associated default values, at least some the default values being adjustable, and the memory device comprises a reset device for resetting the system parameters to the default values.

9. The network computer of claim 1 wherein the memory device comprises a FLASH memory device.

10. The network computer of claim 1 wherein the processor comprises a microprocessor and associated support components, and includes a user input and a user output device.

11. A network computer system, comprising:
a processor;
a memory device coupled to the processor, the memory device containing an embedded operating system that is executed by the processor and providing for the storage of user data; and
a broadband network communication circuit coupled to the processor; the broadband network communication circuit being adapted provide the processor with broadband access to a computer network to thereby access computer resources coupled to the computer network.

12. The network computer of claim 11 wherein the broadband network communication circuit comprises a cable modem.

13. The network computer of 11 wherein the broadband network communication circuit comprises a DSL modem.

14. The network computer of claim 11 wherein the broadband network communication circuit provides access to a computer network including the Internet and the computer resources include Web sites on the Internet and files contained on such Web sites.

15. The network computer of claim 11 wherein the memory device comprises a FLASH memory device.

16. A network computer system, comprising:
a processor;
a memory device coupled to the processor, the memory device containing an embedded operating system that is executed by the processor;
a broadband network communication circuit coupled to the processor;
the broadband network communication circuit being adapted provide the processor with broadband access to a computer network to thereby access computer resources coupled to the computer network; and
a mass storage device coupled to the processor, the mass storage device storing user preference data and user file data that may be accessed by the processor.

17. The network computer of claim 16 wherein the broadband network communications circuit comprises a cable modem.

18. The network computer of claim 16 wherein the broadband network communications circuit comprises a DSL modem.

19. The network computer of claim 16 wherein the mass storage device comprises a hard disk.

20. The network computer of claim 19 wherein the hard disk comprises a user preferences partition and a user file data partition that store associated user preference

data and user file data, respectively, with the data in each partition being capable of being set to desired values independently of the data in the other partition.

21. The network computer of claim 20 wherein the hard disk further comprises a user preferences reset device and a user file data reset device

22. The network computer of claim 16 wherein the embedded operating system includes system parameters having associated default values, at least some the default values being adjustable, and the memory device comprises a reset device for resetting the system parameters to the default values.

23. The network computer of claim 16 wherein the memory device comprises a FLASH memory device.

24. The network computer of claim 16 wherein the processor comprises a microprocessor and associated support components, and includes a user input device and a user output device.

25. A network computer system, comprising:
a processor;
a memory device coupled to the processor, the memory device containing an embedded operating system that is executed by the processor, the embedded operating system including at least one system parameter;
a first reset device coupled to the memory device, the first reset device operable, when activated, to set at least one of the system parameters of the embedded operating system to a desired value;
a network communication circuit coupled to the processor; the network communication circuit being adapted to allow the processor to communicate over a computer network with computer resources coupled to the network; and

a mass storage device coupled to the processor, the mass storage device including a user preferences partition and a user file data partition that contain user preference data and user file data, respectively, that may be accessed by the processor;

a second reset device coupled to the mass storage device, the second reset device operable, when activated, to set at least some of the user preference data to desired values; and

a third reset device coupled to the mass storage device, the third reset device operable, when activated, to set at least some of the user file data to desired values.

26. The network computer of claim 25 wherein the network communication circuit comprises a broadband communications device.

27. The network computer of claim 25 wherein the broadband communications device comprises a cable modem.

28. The network computer of claim 27 wherein the broadband communications device comprises a DSL modem.

29. The network computer of claim 25 wherein the mass storage device comprises a hard disk.

30. The network computer of claim 25 wherein each of the first, second, and third reset devices comprises a switch having an actuator that is adapted to be activated in response to a physical action of a user.

31. The network computer of claim 25 wherein the memory device comprises a FLASH memory device.

32. The network computer of claim 25 wherein the processor comprises a microprocessor and associated support components, and includes a user input and a user output device.

33. The network computer of claim 25 wherein the memory device contains a router program that is executed by the processor to operate the network computer in a Web-caching mode of operation, and the network communication circuit is adapted to allow the processor to communicate over a second computer network, the processor executing the router program to cache files on the mass storage device and provide users coupled to the second computer network with selected cached files responsive to user requests for the selected files.

34. A network computer system, comprising:

a processor means for processing data;

a storage means coupled to the processor means for storing an embedded operating system that is executed by the processor means, the embedded operating system including at least one system parameter;

a first reset means coupled to the first storage means for resetting at least one of the system parameters of the embedded operating system to a desired value when activated;

a network communications means coupled to the processor for allowing the processor to communicate over a computer network with computer resources coupled to the network; and

a mass storage means coupled to the processor means for storing user preference data and user file data that may be accessed by the processor means in a user preferences partition and a user file data partition, respectively;

a second reset means coupled to the mass storage means for resetting at least some of the user preference data to desired values when activated; and

a third reset means coupled to the mass storage means for resetting at least some of the user file data to desired values when activated.

35. The network computer of claim 34 wherein the network communication means comprises a broadband communications means for providing the processor means with broadband access to computer resources on the computer network.

36. The network computer of claim 34 wherein each of the first, second, and third reset means comprises a switch means for developing an active reset signal in response to a physical action of a user.

37. A network computer system, comprising:

a processor;

a memory device coupled to the processor, the memory device containing an embedded operating system that is executed by the processor, the embedded operating system including at least one system parameter;

a first reset device coupled to the memory device, the first reset device operable, when activated, to set at least one of the system parameters of the embedded operating system to a desired value;

a broadband network communication circuit coupled to the processor; the broadband network communication circuit being adapted provide the processor with broadband access to a computer network to thereby access computer resources coupled to the computer network; and

a mass storage device coupled to the processor, the mass storage device including a user preferences partition and a user file data partition that contain user preference data and user file data, respectively, that may be accessed by the processor;

a second reset device coupled to the mass storage device, the second reset device operable, when activated, to set at least some of the user preference data to desired values; and

a third reset device coupled to the mass storage device, the third reset device operable, when activated, to set at least some of the user file data to desired values.

38. The network computer of claim 37 wherein the broadband network communication circuit comprises a cable modem.

39. The network computer of claim 37 wherein the broadband network communication circuit comprises a DSL modem.

40. The network computer of claim 37 wherein the mass storage device comprises a hard disk.

41. The network computer of claim 37 wherein each of the first, second, and third reset devices comprises a switch having an actuator that is adapted to be activated in response to a physical action of a user.

42. The network computer of claim 37 wherein the memory device comprises a FLASH memory device.

43. The network computer of claim 37 wherein the processor comprises a microprocessor and associated support components, and includes a user input and a user output device.

44. A method of operating a network computer system including a processor and a memory device coupled to the processor, the memory device containing an embedded operating system that is executed by the processor, and the embedded operating system including at least one system parameter, the method comprising:

providing the processor with broadband access via a computer network to computer resources coupled to the network;

providing mass storage for user preference data and user file data in a user preferences location and a user file data location, respectively, the data being accessible by the processor; and

independently resetting system parameters associated with the embedded operating system, user preference data, and user file data in response to first, second, and third reset requests, respectively.

45. The method of claim 44 wherein the first, second, and third reset requests comprise respective physical actions of a user.

46. The method of claim 44 wherein providing mass storage for user preference data and user file data in a user preferences location and a user file data location, respectively, comprises providing for storage on a hard disk and the user preferences location and user file data location correspond to a user preferences partition and a user file data partition, respectively, on the disk.